



## *Governor's Office for* **Children and Families**

### **Teen Dating Violence**

February is National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month. Teen dating violence can happen to any young person, anytime, anywhere. Teen dating violence is a pattern of behavior where one individual in a relationship either threatens or uses physical, emotional or sexual abuse to control their partner. Unfortunately, the prevalence of violence and abuse in teen relationships is overwhelming.

#### **Did You Know?**

- One in ten high school students has been purposefully hit, slapped or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend.<sup>i</sup>
- Half of youth who have been victims of both dating violence and rape attempt suicide, compared to 12.5% of non-abused girls and 5.4% of non-abused boys.<sup>ii</sup>
- Being physically or sexually abused makes teen girls six times more likely to become pregnant and twice as likely to get a STD.<sup>iii</sup>
- Girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence and almost triple the national average.<sup>iv</sup>

#### **What is Teen Dating Violence?**

Teen dating violence can include physical, emotional or sexual violence. Dating Violence can also occur electronically with texts, posting sexual pictures online, and using social media to bully and victimize their partner.<sup>v</sup> The issue may be more prevalent than the numbers illustrate, due to the fact that many teens do not report the violence because they are afraid to tell friends and family.

#### **What Does Teen Dating Violence look like?**

Those who have been victimized by teen dating violence, recently or in the past, may experience one or more of the following:<sup>vi</sup>

- Controlling behavior and demands like being told what to wear and who to hang out with
- Teasing and name calling
- Intimidation
- Use of threats
- Being isolated from friends and family by their partner
- Emotional and verbal abuse
- Cyber Stalking
- Abuse via social networking
- Extreme jealousy and possessiveness
- Any signs of physical abuse



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### **What are the Effects of Teen Dating Violence?**

Victims of teen dating violence are more likely to: <sup>vii</sup>

- Be depressed
- Do poorly in school
- Binge drink and use drugs
- Attempt suicide
- Engage in sexual activity
- Have eating disorders
- Have a higher risk of victimization during college

### **What Can We Do to Break the Cycle of Teen Dating Violence?**

The State of Georgia wants to stop teen dating violence before it starts. Our communities can engage, educate and empower youth through prevention programs and awareness events to recognize unhealthy relationships in order to prevent violence. Many organizations within the state have started teen dating violence prevention programs in their local schools, youth civic clubs and after-school programs.

Adults that work with young people can educate themselves on the warning signs of dating violence and intervene if they are concerned. Parents can talk with their children about healthy relationships and model positive relationships at home. Parents and adults can provide a safe space for young people to feel comfortable in discussing their relationships.

### **Resources for Assistance and Information:**

**Georgia's Family Violence Hotline**  
1-800-33-HAVEN (4-2836)

**CDC's Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships**  
[www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/datingmatters](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/datingmatters)

**National Dating Abuse Helpline:**  
1-866-331-9474 or text 77054

**National Domestic Violence Hotline** 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

**Love is Respect**  
[www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)

**Break the Cycle**  
<http://www.breakthecycle.org/>



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- ii D. M. Ackard, Minneapolis, MN, and D. Neumark-Sztainer, Division of Epidemiology, School of Public Health, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, Date Violence and Date Rape Among Adolescents: Associations with Disordered Eating Behaviors and Psychological Health, Child Abuse & Neglect, 26 455-473, (2002).
- iii Decker M, Silverman J, Raj A. 2005. Dating Violence and Sexually Transmitted Disease/HIV Testing and Diagnosis Among Adolescent Females. Pediatrics. 116: 272-276.
- iv Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice and Statistics, Intimate Partner Violence in the United States, 1993-2004.Dec. 2006.
- v National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention, Understanding Teen Dating Violence, 2012. Jan. 2014. Available at [http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/electronic\\_aggression\\_researcher\\_brief-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/electronic_aggression_researcher_brief-a.pdf)
- vi Is This Abuse, Warning Signs of Abuse, December 2013. Available at <http://www.loveisrespect.org/is-this-abuse/is-this-abuse>
- vii Banyard VL, Cross C. Consequences of teen dating violence: Understanding intervening variables in ecological context. Violence Against Women 2008; 14(9):998-1013.
- viii Silverman, J, Raj A, et al. 2001. Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy, and Suicidality. JAMA. 286:572-579. Available at <http://jama.amaassn.org/cgi/reprint/286/5/572>.